

**Introduction:**

After using the methods for determining core competencies outlined in chapter seven, we have arrived at three strong core competencies for the Extended University Division of California State University, Bakersfield. From the 6 identified processes and 32 functions identified in our first journal assignment we determined the existence of three unique core competencies exclusive to the EUD.

**Core Competencies:**

3. Community Driven Program Development - The program development area highlights our specialized curriculum development as a core competency. By developing our courses and certificates in response to the communities needs we provide a unique service to the working professionals of Kern County. We provide specialized training in response to the needs of community groups that no one else provides. We are also able to develop these programs at a lower price and at a speed that no one else can match. Although we do have competitors in the areas of community education (Bakersfield College, the University of Merced, and The Business Center among others) for the most part these courses are developed in a closed system. They put together what they consider the right courses according to certain academic guidelines, and then approach what they would consider good targets for that pre-existing product, instead of approaching their constituents first. They are operating with a preexisting product and hoping that they can attract interest in those products from certain target groups. We, on the other hand, lead with the consumer's wants and needs, and (again, in theory) deliver the ideal product for that "pre-determined" audience. That, along with our lower cost structure, (due to our access to CSUB faculty and other experts) allows us to stay ahead of our competition.

Convenient Scheduling of Classes - Our scheduling processes allow us to offer convenient education as a core competency. Because we schedule our classes in the evening and in locations that are accessible to those in remote areas (i.e. regional and online programs), we are more accessible to those people who wish to get their education while they work full time or lead otherwise busy lives. Open University also highlights this core, as anyone is able to sign up to take a University course without having to be an admitted student. By opening enrollment to those who do not wish to enroll or are not sure they are ready to "re-enter" school we are making education more accessible to working adults or individuals who wish to only take a course or two before committing themselves to a program. There is growing competition in this area of our core, but we remain at the forefront of this area. In particular, we have been able to ensure the dominance in the area of remote program offerings. By using a model of offering "exclusive" programs on the campuses of community colleges in areas where there is no easy access to four year schools (Santa Clarita, Santa Maria) and by maintaining our fees at a

1. “close to state” fee level, we have been able keep any solid competition from encroaching on this area of our business. We are also beginning to expand in the online delivery market, allowing students in remote areas of the state, country, and more recently internationally by able to obtain a Bachelor’s or Master’s Degree without having to leave their house. In this area, there is tremendous competition among schools like National University and the University of Phoenix, but again our cost structure becomes an invaluable asset as well as our affiliation with a California State University. If we are able to continue offering the quality of programs that we offer online at the current price level, we should be able to make severe inroads against that competition.
2. Specialized Guidance for Students - Our student services area offers guidance to those students re-entering the workforce or entering a new career. We are able to give specialized attention to those students who need it so they don’t feel like they are left in the dark. We do not treat our students like just a number as some of the competition does. Being a non-profit organization puts us at a distinct advantage on this point. While competitors like the University of Phoenix and University of Lavern are interested in increasing the bottom line at all costs, our goal is to be able to support the programs we offer and (eventually) create new programs which will in turn support themselves. This allows us to but more focus on our student services area, as we are more concerned with assisting students in completing their education rather than focusing on pushing more students through the system in order to increase our profits. We can take the time and guide students as to the proper place, time, and way to enter our system and what they need to do to complete are programs and be successful students. This is why things like Open University once again set us apart from the competition. To open enrollment and allow “a-la-carte” class enrolment would be contrary to the competitor’s goal. It does not encourage immediate enrollment. We, however, encourage students to “try out” an area or class with the presence of the Open University. Theoretically this leads to more student satisfaction. They are happier with the choices we helped them make on their educational path because it is easier to make changes without having to exit and then re-enter the system.

### **An Issue Among Extended Universities:**

In terms of continuing education, we stand fairly alone compared to the competition. As mentioned above, we have some competition in the form of the University of Phoenix, the University of Laverne, National University, and several others but for the most part, we are offering different products and services than they do or we have the competencies to deal with that competition very well. Some of our greatest competition actually comes in the form of our own structure and that of Extended Education itself.

We find ourselves in a very similar position to many of the other Extended University Divisions around the state (both in the CSU and the UC systems). That position is one of

youth and a struggle between running our divisions as a business rather than as an academic unit. Extended Education is a fairly new concept in the educational system (20 – 30 years). It is a mere child when compared with the many hundreds of years of history in traditional academics. Early in its existence, schools were basically taking an academic model and trying to apply it to a business environment. This caused many problems with priorities and structure. If we were to generate business and maintain a level of surplus to both sustain ourselves and grow our offerings, it was necessary to make change. Because of this, we now see many Extended Universities being run by individuals with more of a business background. Instead of taking the traditional academic model and trying to force it into what basically is a business, we are now (only in the last 10 years really) creating and running our programs from more of a business approach. The problem that now arises is that now we need to decide how a “business unit” is to fit into the academic world. We are not only faced with a tremendous learning curve, but we are finding ourselves with incredible political battles that we have to deal with on top of our normal operating duties. This places a large burden on an operation trying to succeed. This is why it is so important that we design policies and procedures for all of the major processes we undertake. Policies such as these help us to stay on track with all of these large “battles” we must fight and they help us make crucial decisions (such as whether or not to outsource certain processes or functions) that can mean the difference between success and failure.

**Progress report on our Final Project:**

So far we have been able to move through several of the steps in creating a set of policies and procedures for outsourcing at the Extended University. Thanks to the help of the work we have done in class and on our journals, we have been able to establish that we should create general guidelines for ways to approach the potential of outsourcing at the Extended University, and not guidelines for a specific project. We have decided to use our potential “web outsourcing” project as an example to test these policies against. After developing these guidelines we hope to be able to take any situation where outsourcing may be a potential and confidently answer several important questions. Would this make a good project for outsourcing according to these new policies and procedures? If this is a candidate for outsourcing, how should we move forward? As we move forward, what steps should we take for managing change within and outside of our organization? So far we have held several discussions with the Dean of Extended University regarding this project and he seems to be onboard with working with us to potentially use the outcome of our project within the organization of the Extended University.